



News From Congresswoman Hilda L. Solis 32nd Congressional District of California

1725 Longworth HOB | Washington, DC 20515 – 202.225.5464 -- 202.225.5467 f.

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Contact: Edith Robles
(202) 225-2167

Solis, Pelosi and 25 Women Members of Congress Send Letter to Chairman William Thomas about Social Security

Washington, D.C. – *Today, Congresswoman Hilda L. Solis (CA-32) joined House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi and 25 women Members of Congress in sending the following letter to Ways & Means Chairman Bill Thomas, in response to his recent comments that Congress should consider providing different Social Security benefits for men and women. The text of the letter follows:*

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January 24, 2005

The Honorable William Thomas
Chairman, Ways and Means Committee
1102 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Chairman Thomas:

We are extremely concerned about your recent comments last week, and again this weekend, suggesting that because women live longer, they should receive lower Social Security benefits than men. And your comments yesterday refusing to rule out drastic cuts in the guaranteed benefits provided to all Social Security beneficiaries – something that would disproportionately affect women – were equally as troubling.

As you know, women comprise the majority of Social Security beneficiaries, representing almost 60 percent of all Social Security recipients age 65 and over. Without Social Security, 52 percent of white women, 65 percent of African American women, and 61 percent of Hispanic women over the age of 65 would live in poverty. Women are also less likely than men to have pensions or retirement savings to supplement their Social Security checks. They depend on the fundamental guarantee of Social Security.

Social Security helps level the playing field for women. Women, on average, earn less than their male counterparts and also tend to have fewer years in the workforce. Cutting their benefits even further would make it even harder for them to achieve financial security in retirement. That is not the path we want to take.

Mr. Chairman, America's women have heard nothing that would reassure them that the Republican plans for Social Security will not undermine the economic foundation of their retirement. We ask you to clarify your previous statements supporting benefit cuts for America's working women, and to explain how your goal of privatizing the Social Security program makes it easier, not harder, for women to achieve the financial security they have earned and paid for during their working years.

Sincerely,

Solis, Pelosi and 25 Members send Letter to Chairman Thomas